

**Talbot County Economic Development Commission**  
**The Talbot Bank**  
**The Moore Building, 29349 Maple Ave, Trappe, MD 21673**  
**September 4, 2014 Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chairman, Ted Bautz, Peter Dunbar, Haim Loran, Walter Chase, Gerry O'Mara, Paul Makosky and Kelley Malone

**Ex Officio Members Present:** Al Silverstein, Terenda Thomas and Timothy Jones

**Members Excused:** Vice-Chairman, Geoff Oxnam and Debbie Renshaw

**Attendees:** Scott Warner, Laura Heikes, Stephanie Dulin, Robin Haddaway, Jennifer Shall, Yvonne Bartolomeo and Rose Potter.

**Guest Speaker:** Laura Heikes, Senior Vice President, The Talbot Bank, introduced Robin Haddaway, Manager, The Talbot Bank, branch office located in Trappe and serving Trappe and Oxford. Ms. Haddaway has served Talbot Bank in several capacities, including head teller and branch manager with 20 years of experience. The Talbot Bank is located in the Moore Building in Trappe and includes street front offices and a conference room upstairs with 36 stations for training and additional meeting rooms. Avon-Dixon Insurance, Wye Financial and Trust, and the Talbot Bank all use this bank's facility for training and meetings. Additionally, the room is available to the public. MSRF, Habitat for Humanity Choptank, the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce and private businesses have used the community room for private meetings and training. Ms. Heikes introduced Stephanie Dulin, also a Talbot Bank employee, who was behind the curtain preparing a full homemade breakfast with all the trimmings for the commission members and visitors. Ms. Heikes thanked the commission for their work and allowing the Talbot Bank to be a part of their meetings. Mr. Bautz acknowledged that Ms. Heikes was awarded the Chamber of Commerce's 2014 Business Woman of the Year at the Annual Banquet last week..

**Call to Order:** Chairman Ted Bautz called the meeting to order with a quorum at 8:07 a.m.

**Agenda and Minutes:** The Commission approved the September agenda. The draft ED Commission August 07 Meeting Minutes were approved as corrected by Kelley Malone.

**Correspondence:** The director reported there was no correspondence. However, the commission has two outstanding vacancies: commission member Susie Hayward's replacement and ex officio, member Erik Neil who represented the Arts. A letter of recommendation was forwarded to the County Managers Office. No recommendations for the ex officio position have been approved.

**Old Business:** With regard to filling the ex-officio position for the Arts vacancy, Paul Makosky submitted a recommendation for Al Bond, President, Avalon Foundation. The nomination was approved and a letter of recommendation will be sent to the County Managers Office. Mr. Bautz reported that the new art director's agenda may be very full for the next few months.

Mr. Bautz reported the county council approved the real property tax credit amendment; the county council approved a minimum 1,000 sq ft for site plan review requirement. The Development Forum, scheduled for September 17 will review these accomplishments and other updates. The EDC will come before the County on September 23, for their Quarterly Review at the courthouse beginning at 6:00 p.m. A cursory circulation was passed to the members regarding a discussion on the Maryland's Brownfields Program; a voluntary clean-up program. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is continuing the Brownfields Site Assessment Initiative using federal funding to conduct site assessments at

private and publicly owned Brownfield's sites. Talbot County has not participated in this program. One of the requirements for participation is that the jurisdiction provide up to a 50% credit on property tax for assessment. Mr. Bautz suggested the commission look into this matter further, and then bring the issue to the council's attention. A discussion ensued regarding all of the businesses that may be Brownfields and the consequences. The director asked the commission if they would like to bring this matter to the council's attention for a recommendation. MDE's website has a webpage specifically devoted to information regarding the Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative.

**New Business:** Mr. Bautz reported that the Easton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC), in cooperation with the Town of Easton, has set up a series of charrettes with members of the town council the county council, planning commission, as well as community representatives. A series of charrettes will take place today beginning at 10:00 a.m., at the firehouse in Easton and a public charrette will be held at 7 p.m. The process will require a vision for lower Port Street, with revitalization, redevelopment, and adaptive reused mixed housing all the way up to The Hill, a proposed project that will redevelop several blocks of Easton, remarkable for its designation as the first free African American community established in the US, but waiting for verification. Easton Point is a working port that includes several current activities requiring water front usage. The proposed project plans to incorporate existing opportunities for public access to restaurants, beautify and tree line Port Street, as well as upgrade the housing stock. A discussion and questions ensued regarding Port Street redevelopment and the harbor. The director advised the commission to consider that this project includes industrial zoned land and a lot of industrial zoned land has been lost in Easton recently including the rezoning of land to accommodate Waterside Village projects. Mr. Bautz recommended that the commission can brief the council when the information has been formalized and is ready for presentation.

The director reported that the office responded to a request from the MD Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED), for an agriculture production facility requiring a 50-acre site expandable to 150 acres, with a large requirement for electricity and industrial infrastructure. A notice was sent to the real estate community to identify sites. A parcel was identified and information was sent to DBED; DBED briefed the consultant and the site was selected for a tour of the site and the area. An expression of further interest from the client was received. A formal proposal will be drafted and forwarded to the consultant for consideration. The EDO heard back from ARK Reformer™ a project indentified three years ago, as an opportunity to create a demonstration site near the landfill, to convert chicken litter into oil. The project went dormant. The group has continued to modify technology and have patented the process. They are interested in indentifying sites and funds to construct. Ms. Bethke referred them to Somerset County where they have three waste-to-energy projects and funds obligated from the state of Maryland. A discussion ensued regarding chicken litter and the process to convert.

The next Poplar Island tour scheduled for September 11 has 23 people. September 16, Innovation Week, at the Talbot County Library in Easton, will include the Maryland Startup Bus and a 3D Additive Manufacturing demonstration for entrepreneurs. The director invited business people to contact her office for more information about the opportunity to "pitch" their ideas on the Startup Bus.

The Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) Fall Conference is October 26 and 27 at Rocky Gap with a program dedicated to Manufacturing in Maryland.

**Business Environment Committee:** Ted Bautz, Chair reported the Talbot County and Towns Development Forum would be held on September 17 at 7:00 a.m. at the Community Center on Route 50. The committee has been working on different ways to improve the business environment, and reviewing

the permitting process and has recommended this forum. The agenda will identify policy changes, at the town and county, including a property tax incentive, reduction of impact fees, changes in the permitting process and an update on the Comprehensive Plan process. The BE Committee has invited the development community and those interested to share in this news and information. The county is expanding MUNIS<sup>®</sup> as a communication vehicle and may work to improve the business "friendliness" that the committee is trying to achieve. The Planning and Zoning Commission (P&ZC) continues to hold work sessions on the Comprehensive Plan. The P&ZC have sent their draft to the Maryland Departments for their input. Tom Hughes, Talbot County P&Z President, will discuss the Comprehensive Plan process.

**Marketing Committee:** Haim Loran, Chair reported their job is to bring in new businesses as well as retain those businesses that are already here. The committee has conducted a survey of 400 businesses in the county that have 10 or more employees, which totaled approximately 400. Fifty completed surveys came back, which is only a small percentage of the 400. The Committee will divide the list of remaining business and call them for their input. The total, to date, is 75 completed surveys and the goal is at least 100. Mr. Loran went over some of the obstacles in bringing new businesses to the county. Mr. Loran is focusing on testing labs and developing a mailing list. Mr. Loran asked Mr. Pack for resources to assist the EDO with this project. Mr. Silverstein asked Mr. Loran if he had researched Dun & Bradstreet, Inc. and the cost of their lists. There is money in the budget for marketing. The director indicated that she will meet with Mr. Loran and will move this project ahead. Mr. Loran continued that the Cadmus building has been renovated for medical offices and Shore Medical will be moving some offices there, which will create vacancies in these small buildings, which used to be medical offices. These buildings are ideal for material testing labs because they have a small offices and labs. Mr. Loran expects to mail out 1000 pieces with a return of 50 to 100 responses from businesses who may be intersted. The EDO is also working on an initiative to brand Talbot County. Journal Communications Services are putting together a regional economic development magazine for the Upper Shore and requesting participation from large employers.

**Chairman's Report:** Mr. Bautz reported he attended the Talbot County Chamber's 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Presentation. "There is marvelous talent in Talbot County and it speaks well for the quality of the business community and what we can accomplish, as well as the commitment that the businesses make."

**Director's Report:** The director introduced Trappe Commissioners, Yvonne Bartolommeo and Rose Potter, and Jennifer Shull, Planning Officer, Town of Trappe and thanked them for attending the meeting. Ms Bethke mentioned there have been retention visits to: Chesapeake Utilities, Trappe Treasure Chest, Sugar Buns, The Boatworks, Teddy Bear Fresh, Kangde Xin, Northeastern Plumbing Supply, and the Cooperative Oxford Lab. The director met with Michelle Swann at the Easton High School regarding job coordination for high school students. They are also working on the Rotary sponsored Job Fair.

**Members' Reports:** **Al Silverstein, President, Talbot County Chamber of Commerce:** reported economic development professionals from the five counties will be meeting with Dan McDermott, Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board, to talk about what our employers' needs are for a regional job fair scheduled for October 22 at the Talbot County Community Center. On October 16 the chamber will host the Annual Economic Symposium, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., at the Tidewater Inn with Anirban Basu, President and CEO, Sage Policy Group and M&T Bank addressing Maryland's economy. **Mike Henry, Director, Easton Airport:** reported the Maryland Airport Association and Aviation Alliance Across America successfully collaborated with the Governor of Maryland to proclaim September General Aviation and Airport month. Maryland has 36 airports and the economic impact is a little over \$550

million per year. Mayor Willey joined the effort with a proclamation from the Town of Easton. Mr. Henry reported that airport based Trident received a Navy contract this year to train pilots which generated a little over 30 thousand operations from June through August. Fuel sales were up over 200%. Mr. Henry spoke with the program manager at the Naval Academy and they plan to renew the contract for next year. Mr. Henry is also working with Blue Sky, LLC, building a new corporate hanger. Easton currently has 187 aircraft based at the airport, which is the most they have ever had and 22 are jets. Mr. Henry is working with Congressman Harris' office for an aviation outreach event to be hosted October 11. Representatives from NASA, the FAA, Orbital and Spaceport indicated they would attend. Mr. Henry is working with a company regarding the solar panels on about 20 acres at the airport. The airport received two grants, one for resurfacing the terminal apron and the other for the obstruction removal. Lastly, Airport Day is on September 27. **Peter Dunbar, Town of Oxford:** No report. **Walter Chase, Town of Trappe:** reported Trappe has a number of business vacancies. October 4 is Trappe'toberfest and October 11 is Nace's Day Celebration. **Kelley Malone, Town of Easton:** reported there is a delay in the annexation process for Talbot Commerce Park. A key property has been identified in the critical area and this matter must be resolved. Dunkin Donuts will be locating in the former Legal Aid building next to Acme. Acme is preparing for facade upgrades. Easton Eye Care plans to expand their building, which has triggered a PUD amendment review of the Planning Commission and Town Council as a significant change under current regulations. Tracy Ward, Cleo Braver and Herb Miller presented to the Town Council on September 18 a formal request that the town grant 48 acres, on the Mistletoe property, as an in-kind donation to support their grant process to move forward with the Food Hub. The Town will be hosting a 911 Memorial Service, open to the public, at 8:30 a.m. at the Park across from the Library. **Tim Jones, Chesapeake College:** reported the college is back in session with its fall program and enrollment is down 5%, attributed to the decline in the high school population. The College Board approved to proceed with a contract for the purchase of a two mega-watt system solar project on the campus. The system will require 6 acres of ground for panels and provide for 242 canopy spaces. The two mega-watt system will generate between 35-40% of the power usage on campus and represents a utilities cost saving of almost \$100,000 per year. The college is getting ready to implement single stream recycling on campus. The construction project for the Athletic Center remains on schedule. **Terenda Thomas, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR):** reported they are in a position to offer various workshops to job seekers including, *Interviewing* and *Transferable Skills*. DLLR's Business Service Representatives are meeting with businesses and are identifying any shortcomings of their applicants. DLLR seeks to strengthen individual candidates for interviewing and for applying skill sets to job vacancies. Returning vets will benefit from transferring their military skills to the civilian world. The data shows that returning vets are out there, but DLLR is having a hard time contacting them. Mr. Bautz suggested that DLLR work with Chesapeake College. A discussion regarding how and where to reach returning vets ensued. The county's July unemployment rate was reported to be 5.9% and represents a drop from 6.1% the previous month. **Scott Warner, MD Rural Development Center:** reported Michael Scott, Director, Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative at Salisbury University was awarded Maryland's Innovator for 2014. **Gerald O'Mara, Agriculture:** reported a group in Oxford supporting the Wounded Warriors program has merged efforts with Freedom Alliance that supports and honors our service members and their families. Lt Col Oliver North founded the Freedom Alliance in 1990 and now serves as the organization's Honorary Chairman. The corn harvest is above normal and it appears the yields will be good. The prices for corn are probably 40% of what they were two years ago. The Talbot County Extension Office will be celebrating 100 years of service on October 8, from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. at

their offices on Mary's Court. The role of the extension service is to take the information that comes from land grant universities from their research and transmit it to every county in the country.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

**Economic Development Commission Meetings are held at 8:00 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month. The meetings are open to the public. The next meeting will be October 2 at the Oxford Community Center, 200 Oxford Road, Oxford, MD 21654.**

National Census of Agriculture: [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov)

Strategic Networks Group/Questionnaire: [www.sngroup.com/Maryland](http://www.sngroup.com/Maryland)

Maryland Broadband Map: <http://mdbroadbandmap.org>

Veterans Employment and Training Service: [www.dol.gov/vets/vets-100.html](http://www.dol.gov/vets/vets-100.html)

The Maryland Workforce Exchange and labor market information are available online at <https://mwejobs.maryland.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>.